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## **Sen. Hardiman leads efforts to rename Lansing building in honor of Richard Austin**

**LANSING** – The state Treasury Building in Lansing would be named in honor of Richard Austin, a former Michigan secretary of state, because of the effort led by Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood.

The Michigan Senate is considering Hardiman's Senate Bill 365. His effort would rename the building, located near the corner of Allegan and Walnut streets, that now houses the executive offices and the elections division of the Secretary of State's Office, among others. About half of the building's space is used by the Secretary of State's Office.

"Nothing is more fitting than honoring Secretary Austin by naming the state building that houses Secretary of State and Treasury workers after him," Hardiman said. "Austin's pioneering public-service career, from his time as a CPA to elected statewide office, mark him as a role model for many Michigan residents."

Austin, who died in 2001 at the age of 87, represents a number of firsts for African Americans in Michigan. He was the first black secretary of state, serving from 1971 to 1994 as a Democrat, as well as being Michigan's first black major state office-holder. In 1941, he became the first black certified public accountant in Michigan.

Before becoming secretary of state, Austin served as Wayne County's auditor, and before that had been the first black candidate for mayor of Detroit. He also participated in Michigan's 1961 constitutional convention that drafted a new state constitution.

The Senate is expected to vote on Hardiman's bill in the coming days.

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